



[Exhibitors sought for U.S. Virgin Islands small business expo](#)

Submitted by Semele George on Thu, 07/31/2014 - 7:58am

CHARLOTTE AMALIE, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands - July 30, 2014 - The V.I. Economic Development Authority's (VIEDA) State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Program is seeking exhibitors in the industries of food, gift and arts, beauty and wellness, music, jewelry, fashion, building and industrial materials to participate in its 2014 U.S. Virgin Islands International Artistry and Business Expo. This expo will be held from September 19-21, 2014 at the Mark C. Marin Center (MCM Center) at Antilles School on St. Thomas. This expo is co-sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the federal agency that awarded two grants to the Territory for the administering of the STEP Grant Program in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The 2014 U.S. Virgin Islands International Artistry and Business Expo will provide small manufacturers with the opportunity to network with international buyers from more than 10 countries, introduce their products to potential customers, learn from industry experts, and connect with potential investors. This expo will feature some of the USVI's best small manufacturers that are interested in exporting their products and services to foreign markets. The cost for exhibiting at this expo is \$100. The exhibitor registration deadline is August 7, 2014.

"This business expo is another on-going initiative to accomplish the goals of the STEP Grant Program in the Territory which is primarily to help increase U.S. Virgin Islands exports. This is also an opportunity for our small business exporters to be introduced to foreign buyers so that they can increase their profit margins while creating jobs and tax revenues for our Territory," said VIEDA's Chief Executive Officer Percival E. Clouden.

The general public is also invited to attend the expo which will be held on September 19 at 5:00 p.m., September 20 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on September 21 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Booth display areas will be available for exhibitors to showcase and sell their products and services, and to perform live demonstrations. Workshops that are designed to teach the exhibitors and expo attendees how to successfully market their products and services to foreign buyers will also be held during the expo.

According to USVI STEP Coordinator Nadine T. Marchena Kean, "This expo would enable the VIEDA to better assist our Territory's small business exporters. The 2014 USVI International Artistry and Business Expo will also provide these small business owners with exporting opportunities that will drive the need for increased production of their products and services through foreign buyers."

In 2011 and 2012, the U.S. SBA approved the U.S. Virgin Islands' grant applications to participate in the STEP Program. To date, the Territory has been awarded more than \$800,000 in grant funding to assist local small exporters. In 2011, the VIEDA was designated by USVI Governor John P. deJongh, Jr., as the agency to administer the STEP program in the Territory and has recently applied for a third grant for this program.

The STEP program is a three-year pilot program trade initiative that is authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. It is designed to help small businesses grow, increase their exporting activities, and raise the value of the products and services of small business exporters.

For more information on exhibitor requirements and how to register, contact Nadine T. Marchena Kean via email at nmarchena@usvieda.org or Linda Bailey at (340) 727-9247.

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